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Urban renewal study.
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DEFINITIONSA. Definitions of Renewal Terms

The terms "urban renewal", "conservation", "rehabilitation", "redevelopment", "slum", "blight" and "substandard", although much used, are seldom adequately defined in a manner which permits full understanding between professionals and officials, and allows any degree of effective communication with the public.

In this effort under the Urban Renewal Study to undertake a comprehensive analysis of urban conditions and to develop a program of action, it is necessary that a set of definitions of the above terms be presented which is generally acceptable and easily understood. This is extremely important here in Canada where the entire urban renewal approach has been conceived primarily as a means of improving housing conditions in the older areas, and because of this, and reflecting legislative history, urban renewal has often been considered the same as public housing in general usage.

The following definitions have therefore been drafted for consideration after a survey of the various definitions used in current publications, primarily those of local origin and reflect current policies and practices.

1. URBAN RENEWAL

"Urban renewal" simply means the process of adjusting the obsolete parts of our urban areas to present and anticipated demands. A public program of urban renewal is an effort to guide this total process in the public interest as part of an on-going program to improve the entire community rather than as a series of unrelated projects directed at specific problem areas.



Urban renewal is a broad concept reflecting the fact that experience has shown that previous public and private programs of redevelopment, rehabilitation, stimulation of new private development, public housing and other efforts were inadequate, when singly or if not properly coordinated, to check the problem of decline of significant areas of our cities.

It was realized that direct governmental action in the form of redevelopment and public housing, was first, incapable of dealing with declining areas which were not yet blighted; and second, did nothing to check the spread of blight into formerly good areas; and last, that such programs on a large scale, in addition to being beyond the financial resources of most governments, were questionable in terms of social and economic policy.

It was also realized that practically all of our existing physical plant--housing, as well as commercial and industrial facilities--were constructed by private enterprise, as most of the new facilities would be also; and that any successful attack on the problems of urban blight would require a program which would involve a partnership of government and private enterprise. Under such an approach, the powers and resources of government would be used to assist and stimulate private investment on one hand, but on the other, to directly undertake actions to correct inequities in the private market and to achieve specific social and economic objectives.

With this as a background, urban renewal can be defined as:

"A concept of coordinated action to maintain and improve our urban areas. It involves a positive program of public and private urban maintenance, including redevelopment, rehabilitation, conservation, and code enforcement, covering both public and private structures, and the provision of adequate community services and facilities and overall amenity directed towards the preservation or the establishment or re-establishment of the older sections of our urban areas as socially desirable and economically healthy places in which to live and work."

2. CONSERVATION

The preservation of presently sound and viable areas of the community by the prevention of deterioration through effective municipal house-keeping and the stringent enforcement of controls over the maintenance, use, and development of private properties.

3. REHABILITATION

The raising of general environmental standards through the improvement or restoration of structures, utilities and facilities in an area which, though generally consistent in its land uses with community requirements as determined by the planning process, is in a state of incipient blight. It may involve the acquisition and clearance of scattered, deteriorated buildings, the public or private reconditioning of the remaining inadequate structures, and the construction of a relatively small number of new structures. The provision of street, school, park or other public improvements may be required, along with intensive

enforcement of housing and other codes and other voluntary or publicly sponsored neighborhood conservation measures.

4. REDEVELOPMENT

Redevelopment, as a general term, has been used to describe the process through which structures are replaced by other structures. In the operations of the private market this has almost invariably meant the succession of one use by a "higher and better" use -- a phrase which means a new structure which will bring a higher rate of return on investment.

For the purpose of this study, a clear distinction will be made between the methods by which uses are replaced in terms of sponsorship -- whether the action is initiated by private entrepreneurs, or through governmental intervention.

Private Redevelopment: the private acquisition and demolition of existing structures, and replacement with new structures.

Public Redevelopment: the public acquisition, by expropriation, if necessary, and removal of groups of predominantly obsolete and otherwise substandard structures and patterns of building lots and streets in a residential, commercial or industrial area, followed by replacement with an improved pattern of public and/or private structures, open spaces and service facilities.



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5. SLUM

The term "slum", in use for many years to describe poor living conditions, has generally been applied equally to housing, neighborhoods, and to people. In its original usage it referred as much to the social disorganization and different moral standards of the occupants of poorer areas as much as to the physical condition of the structures. It therefore obscured attempts to understand the relationships between poor housing and environment on health, behavior and attitudes, and gave rise to general attitudes reflecting an overall characterization of all the occupants of an area as "slum-dwellers", with all that this implied in terms of general undesirability.

This meaning of the word still persists; and in view of the greater public and private awareness of urban conditions today, and the availability of other, equally descriptive but more precise terms, the term "slum" will not be used in this Study.

6. BLIGHT

This term, when used with reference to urban conditions, refers to the physical deterioration as well as the functional, economic and social obsolescence of areas. Although a main element of urban blight is the condition of structures, the term blighted is seldom applied to individual structures, these are generally defined as "deteriorated", "dilapidated", or "substandard".

7. SUBSTANDARD

The term "substandard", although difficult to define precisely in physical terms, is generally accepted as a description of conditions of housing and recently also of conditions in non-residential buildings, which may be determined to endanger the health, safety, morals and general welfare of the populace.

Other than the above determination, and the specific provisions of local by-laws and ordinances, determinations of what constitutes "substandard" have generally been left to administrative determination, subject to the test of reasonableness; and in view of the changing social standards and the variations in these standards between communities, it is believed that this should continue until more precise instruments are developed to measure the effects in inadequate facilities and an overall policy devised.

It should be noted, however, that specific criteria for recommended use here in Toronto will necessarily be developed as part of this study.

These, however, will be based upon local conditions and policies, and should not be construed as having general applicability.

B. Definitions of Other Terms Used in Planning and Renewal

GOAL

That toward which effort is directed; aim or end. Generally synonymous with objective, but as used in this set of definitions it is regarded as the ultimate aim or end, or overall objective.

OBJECTIVE

An end toward which efforts are directed; something aimed at. As used in the context of planning or renewal, there are many specific objectives relating to the various elements of the city structure, i. e., population distribution, housing, commercial and industrial activity, etc.

PLAN

A formulated method of working towards a goal; thinking out purposes and acts beforehand.

PRINCIPLE

The general method of formation, operation or procedure to be applied or followed in order to achieve a stated or given objective.

POLICY

A definite course of action adopted based on accepted principles or other considerations.

PROJECT

A specific action which is contemplated; often tentative and may be either simple, or elaborate or extensive.

PROGRAM

A definite interrelated--financially, functionally, or in time--series of actions, based upon a plan with stated objectives and including principles, policies and projects.

ASSUMPTION

Something postulated or taken for granted; a judgment or supposition which is stated without proof.

STRATEGY

The method of conducting operations, i. e. , the staging and scheduling of actions such as the various projects within a program.

CRITERION

A test which is used for judging the value or suitability of actions or conditions, etc.

STANDARD

A generally accepted model or measure used as a basis for measurement or comparison of correctness, quantity or quality.

This set of definitions will be expanded to include other terms as the need arises throughout the course of this study.

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